

CIA Will Not Prosecute Students Over Disclosures

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Agency Is Reassuring

BY BEN A. FRANKLIN

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 19.—Theme to prosecution under the

Central Intelligence Agency's espionage laws of the United States, it was "inconceivable," states Mr. Houston.

Today, he said, "The key word is 'may.' We would have closed their secret relationship to show intent to harm the United States by giving information to a foreign power. I don't think we could do that in revelations."

Lawrence R. Houston, general counsel of the CIA, disclosed in a telephone interview that "we have talked about that and there is to be no retribution, no prosecution."

In the past most CIA officials have declined any comment to newsmen, but Mr. Houston made it clear today that he sought to reassure student association officers that there would be no criminal prosecution.

"These boys were driven into a corner where they had to say something," he said. He did not elaborate.

According to student officers, members of the association who knew of the CIA's financial support or who agreed to cooperate with the agency in collecting information abroad were required to sign a security agreement that firmly forbade any disclosures, intentionally or by "negligence."

The security oath, a copy of

which was obtained today from non-student sources, includes a warning that "intentional or negligent violation of this se-

crecy agreement may subject

association's 10-member National Supervisory Board, said that some members and staff officials of the organization have been "trapped" into collecting "sensitive information" for the CIA, by a process that involved the security agreement and its implied threat of criminal prosecution for disclosure.

"Prior to establishing a relationship with a staff member," Mr. Brown's statement said, "The agency ran a security clearance on the individual and asked him to sign a national security agreement. Individuals who signed the oath were informed that violations of the oath could result in jail sentences of up to 20 years."

Mr. Houston, said today:

"Of course, we don't like what has happened, and we certainly don't mean that the decision not to prosecute gives these people carte blanche to discuss anything further they may know that is of a confidential nature. There is some information we think they should plainly not discuss."